

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for transmitting electronic data, the method comprising:

receiving, at a communications system host, electronic data transmitted from a sender and addressed to an intended recipient;

~~endorsing~~authenticating the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data; and

~~modifying the electronic data with endorsement information-appending information to the electronic data indicating that the electronic data have been authenticated.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~authenticating~~endorsing comprises identifying the sender of the electronic data.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the sender is identified by a screen name.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the sender is identified by an IP address.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~authenticating~~endorsing further comprises designating a level of security corresponding to the sender of the electronic data.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~authenticating~~endorsing further comprises verifying that at least one attribute of the electronic data is an attribute of an authorized sender.

7. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the attribute comprises a screen name.
8. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the attribute comprises an IP address.
9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~authenticating~~endorsing further comprises designating a level of security corresponding to at least one attribute of the electronic data.
10. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
storing content of the electronic data in a first storage area of the communications system host; and  
storing attributes of the electronic data in a second storage area of the communications system host.
11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the endorsement ~~appended~~ information to the intended recipient.
12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the endorsed ~~appended~~ information is presented with the attributes of the electronic data.
13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the endorsed ~~appended~~ information is presented with the content of the electronic data.
14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the endorsed ~~appended~~ information is capable of being rendered by the intended recipient as an icon indicative of endorsement~~authentication~~.
15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the endorsed ~~appended~~ information is capable of being rendered by the intended recipient as a graphical user interface indicative of endorsement~~authentication~~.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 wherein the graphical user interface includes a border indicative of ~~authentication~~endorsement around contents of the electronic data.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the electronic data comprises an e-mail message.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the electronic data comprises an instant message.

19. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for transmitting electronic data, the apparatus comprising a host configured to:

receive, at a communications system host, electronic data transmitted from a sender and addressed to an intended recipient;

~~authenticate~~endorse the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data; and  
modify the electronic data with endorsement information~~append indicating that the electronic data have been authenticated.~~

20. (Currently Amended) A computer program, stored on a computer readable medium, comprising instructions for:

receiving, at a communications system host, electronic data transmitted from a sender and addressed to an intended recipient;

~~authenticating~~endorsing the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data; and

modifying the electronic data with endorsement information~~appending information to the electronic data indicating that the electronic data have been authenticated.~~

21. (Original) The computer program of claim 20 wherein the computer readable medium is a disc.

22. (Original) The computer program of claim 20 wherein the computer readable medium is a client device.

23. (Original) The computer program of claim 20 wherein the computer readable medium is a host device.

24. (Original) The computer program of claim 20 wherein the computer readable medium is a propagated signal.

25. (Currently Amended) A method for receiving electronic data transmitted from a sender to an intended recipient through a communications system, the communications system ~~endorsing~~authenticating the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data, the method comprising:

receiving, from a communications system host, information indicating that the electronic data ~~has~~have been ~~endorsed~~authenticated; and

rendering the information to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data has been ~~endorsed~~authenticated.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25 wherein the endorsement information is rendered by the intended recipient as an icon indicative of ~~endorsement~~authentication.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25 wherein the endorsement information is rendered by the intended recipient as a graphical user interface indicative of ~~authentication~~endorsement.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 27 wherein the graphical user interface includes a border indicative of ~~endorsement~~authentication around contents of the electronic data.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25 wherein the endorsement information is rendered with contents of the electronic data.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25 wherein the endorsed information is rendered with attributes of the electronic data.

31. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein the electronic data comprises an e-mail message.

32. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein the electronic data comprises an instant message.

33. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for receiving electronic data transmitted from a sender to an intended recipient through a communications system, the communications system ~~endorsing~~authenticating the electronic data based on attributes of the electronic data, the apparatus comprising a client configured to:

receive, from a communications system host, endorsement information indicating that the electronic data ~~hash~~have been ~~endorsed~~authenticated; and

render the endorsement ~~appended~~ information to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data ~~hash~~have been ~~endorsed~~authenticated.

34. (Currently Amended) A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium for receiving electronic data transmitted from a sender to an intended recipient through a communications system, the communications system ~~endorsing~~authenticating the electronic data based on attributes of electronic data, the computer program comprising instructions for:

receiving, from a communications system host, endorsement information indicating that the electronic data ~~have~~has been ~~endorsed~~authenticated; and

rendering the information to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data ~~hashave~~ been ~~authenticated~~endorsed.

35. (Original) The computer program of claim 34, wherein the computer readable medium is a disc.

36. (Original) The computer program of claim 34, wherein the computer readable medium is a client device.

37. (Original) The computer program of claim 34, wherein the computer readable medium is a host device.

38. (Original) The computer program of claim 34, wherein the computer readable medium is a propagated signal.

39. (Currently Amended) A graphical user interface for rendering information associated with electronic data transmitted from a sender to an intended recipient, the graphical user interface rendering the endorsement information to a user of the intended recipient so as to inform the user of the intended recipient that the electronic data ~~hashave~~ been ~~endorsed~~authenticated, the graphical user interface comprising a border indicative of ~~endorsement~~authentication around contents of the electronic data.

40. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein appending the endorsement information enables a messaging application to visually distinguish endorsed messages from nonendorsed messages.

41. (New) The method of claim 40 wherein enabling the messaging application to visually distinguish between endorsed and nonendorsed messages includes presenting an

endorsed icon for an endorsed electronic mail message in an electronic mail inbox that also includes nonendorsed electronic mail messages.

42. (New) The method of claim 40 wherein enabling the messaging application to visually distinguish between endorsed and nonendorsed messages includes presenting an endorsed envelope, an endorsed seal, or an endorsed border for an endorsed electronic mail message that is differentiated from other envelopes, seals, or borders used in nonendorsed electronic mail messages.

43. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein modifying the electronic data includes appending endorsement informatin to originally-received electronic data.

44. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein modifying the electronic data includes instructing a rendering application that the electronic data represents endorsed communications.

45. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein modifying the electronic data with endorsement information includes configuring a messaging communication to reflect endorsement by a messaging provider.